



For Immediate Release
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**Floor Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**

Mr. President, today, we continue consideration of the economic recovery bill.

Our country is facing a serious economic challenge. America is in the middle of the most significant economic downturn in the lifetimes of most Americans.

And the bill before us is a serious response. The Finance and Appropriations Committees have sought to assemble the most effective tools available to help the economy recover. Ninety-nine percent of the Finance Committee's response will take effect in the first 19 months of the bill.

Today we begin work in earnest on the bill. We hope to consider a number of amendments today.

We have taken extraordinary steps to ensure that the Senate is considering this bill with a fair process. We posted the Finance Committee part of the bill on the Internet last Friday. And Chairman Inouye and I submitted our substitute amendment for the Congressional Record last Friday, as well. So the legislative text of the measure before us has been available for four days.

During the Finance Committee's consideration of the bill in committee, we had a thorough and open amendment process. The Committee considered the bill over the course of 11 hours. Senators filed more than 200 amendments. The committee voted on 30 amendments.

As we proceed to consideration of the bill here on the Senate floor, we also hope to have an open amendment process. We hope that it will proceed much as it did on the children's health bill last week.

As Senators will recall, last week, the Senate considered the children's health bill over the course of four days. Senators offered 27 amendments. The Senate conducted roll-call votes on 14 amendments.

I do not believe that we turned any Senator away from offering an amendment last week. We had a thorough process. And the Senate passed the children's health bill with an overwhelming 66 to 32 vote.

This week, on the economic recovery bill, we hope once again to process a number of amendments. We intend to begin with an amendment by the Senator from Washington, Senator Murray, regarding infrastructure.

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This afternoon, we expect to consider amendments by Senator Mikulski regarding automobiles, Senator Boxer regarding repatriation, and Senator Feingold regarding earmarks.

We hope to consider multiple amendments during the day.

This is a significant bill. We have work product from both the Appropriations and Finance Committees represented in the pending substitute.

Senators Inouye and Cochran will manage the bill for Appropriations matters. And Senator Grassley and I will be managing the bill for Finance matters.

I urge Senators to let the managers know of their intentions to offer amendments. We will want to make sure that the appropriate manager is here to respond to the amendment. And as much as possible, we would like to give all Senators notice of what subjects will be coming up.

I thank all Senators for their cooperation. And I look forward to a healthy debate.

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